

# BOOK REVIEW

**SUNDEW STRANGLERS: Plants that Eat Insects** by Jerome Wexler, 1995. Dutton Children Books, Penguin Books USA Inc, NY.,NY 10014. \$15.99. ISBN 0-525-45208-7

This 45 page book for the juvenile literature describes what sundew plants are and how they digest insects after capturing them. The author uses a mature *Drosera capensis* to illustrate many of the operations that the plant uses to gain its nutrition. It is a good book to give someone in the preteen years who indicates an interest and wants an introductory course in these fascinating plants. . .

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## Literature Review

**Adamec, Lubomir.** 1995. Ecological requirements and recent European distribution of the aquatic carnivorous plant *Aldrovanda vesiculosa* L. — A review. *Folia Geobot. Phytotax.*, Praha, 30:53-61.

This is an excellent review of the distribution problem with *Aldrovanda* in Europe along with good observations on growing conditions and their adaptation to outdoor culture in The Czech Republic where they are kept outdoors year round.

We often think of Australia or the orient when we think of *Aldrovanda*, yet there was once a considerable European series of populations wherein plants were adopted to more temperate climate. Unfortunately, due mainly to pollution and industrial growth, these locations are now down to a precious few and some contain only a few countable plants! There is a distribution map in the paper, and general discussion of each known extant location in an appendix.

The requirements noted in the field that support growth of the species, and which were further studied in the lab and in growing plants, include high CO<sub>2</sub> (not bicarbonate), medium concentrations of humic acids (tannins), high biomass of dead and partly decomposed litter (e.g. *Cares*, *Phragmites*, etc.), open water surface with full light exposure, transparent water, warmth, shallow water, rich in zooplankton, medium high concentration of ammonium and phosphate, high oxygen concentration. The acidity, pH, is not as important as once thought. There are more details on these factors in the paper, which you can get copied at a botanical library (This reviewer cannot supply copies!).

**IUCN red list categories.** IUCN Species Survival Commission. 1994. 21p.

IUCN has prepared a new set of categories for classifying species into levels of threat. There are now eight categories ranging from the most dire (extinct) down to "not evaluated". Near the middle of the list are "critically endangered", "endangered" and "vulnerable" which will likely receive most attention since they indicate still living populations with sufficient data to indicate serious problems. The booklet goes into great detail on definitions and instruction on how to arrive at a suitable classification, including using numbers of populations and plants within populations. These new categories will ultimately likely prove more useful than the older classes since definitions are more precise.

There is no information in the booklet concerning how to obtain copies, but you might try writing the following for information: Species Survival Commission, c/o Chicago Zoological Society, Brookfield, IL 60513, USA.

**Rondeau, J. Hawkeye.** 1995. Carnivorous plants of the west volume II: California, Oregon and Washington. Published by author. 82 p. plus maps, drawings, color plates.

This is an update and geographic expansion of the author's first book of 1991 which covered the CP of California. He has now surveyed the US west coast, and Mere is promise of a third edition in the future to include Alaska and western Canada.

The author opens with acknowledgments, followed by a preface and a general listing of most frequently quoted sites without being too specific for conservation reasons. There is a good summary first chapter on carnivorous plants in general, followed by specific chapters on the CP families of the west coast.

At this point, I will say that this is a book for everyone who wishes to add to their CP library, giving valuable information and insight at a very reasonable price. Even if you do not live on the west coast or ever intend botanizing the region this book will still be useful. While the plant descriptions Eve excellent and allow certain identification, the heavy emphasis in field observations, plant associates, ecology, etc. are very helpful.

There are some new discoveries mentioned, including sites further south into California for *Utriculatla ochroleuca* There is also a clear historical outline of the confusing taxonomic situation regarding pinguiculas on the coast and where we stand on nomenclature. While the author does not endorse either lumping or splitting, he mentions that they MAY eventually be included all in one species at some point.

The illustrative material is excellent with regional maps showing areas where species have been reported, and some fine color plates, including a full cover of *Darlingtonia*.

The book concludes with an epilog that is clearly upbeat for the future. While some locations on the coast are clearly threatened or have even been destroyed since the 1991 edition, CP in general seem to be in relative abundance (except of course for certain rare variations). The author also mentions many huge areas of wilderness and near wilderness that have yet to be surveyed for CP sites.

I must mention, with great pleasure, that at the very end there is a very thorough 24 page bibliography which I always appreciate in order to catch up on missed articles of one sort or another. I always send off a large order for xerocopies to my favorite botanical library.

For purchase, write J. Hawkeye Rondeau, 37 Sunnyslope Ave., San Jose CA 95127.

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## Want Ad

**David-Emil Wickstrom** (Weseler Str. 17, D-10318 Berlin, Germany)  
He is looking for all available information on *Drosera regia* and *Utricularia gibba*.